

BREA NEWS

www.brea.bnl.gov

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November 2009

BREA Meetings

BREA meetings are held each month (with the exception of August), usually in Berkner Hall at noon on the second Wednesday. All BREA members are invited to participate.

Meeting Schedule

- December 9, 2009
- January 13, 2010
- February 10, 2010

BREA Officers

President:
Arnold Peskin

Vice President:
Robert Marr

Treasurer:
Ken Mohring

Secretary:
Dave Cox

Interim Newsletter
Editors:

Dave Cox
Joyce Tichler

Election Time is Here!

As we approached the end of this year the Nominating Committee was charged with the task of finding candidates to stand for election to the BREA Board of Directors. At the September meeting, the members present voted to appoint Joyce Tichler, Myron Strongin and Bob Marr, who after much hard work are pleased to announce the following slate of candidates:

President: Eena Mai Franz
Vice-President: Dave Cox
Treasurer: Ken Mohring
Secretary: Sonja Santos

Elected Officers will serve terms of two years, starting in January, 2010. Ballots and biographical sketches of the candidates are included in the accompanying insert to the Newsletter. The Board is painfully aware that although this is an election, there is only a single candidate for each position. This is not because of any lack of effort on the part of the Nominating Committee — it simply and unfortunately reflects the difficulty of finding people willing to serve. As in previous elections, a candidate shall be elected only if he or she receives a positive vote on a majority of the ballots returned. Please be sure to return your ballot to the BREA address shown on the back page **no later than December 20.**

This is an opportune time to reflect upon the purpose of BREA. As stated in the Constitution and By-laws, this shall be “to further retiree interests and benefits, to build closer community ties between BNL and its neighbors, to publish a newsletter, and to encourage activities for social interaction within the retirement community”. This is no trivial task! As emphasized by the President in his column on the next page, we cannot hope to achieve these objectives without the active support and participation of our members, and we urge those of you who live locally to make the effort to attend at least some of the monthly meetings, and perhaps volunteer for one of the many non-elective positions — or even consider standing as a candidate in the 2012 elections!

As for the Newsletter, this is the main means of communication with our roughly 300 members. However, we need to hear from you! What would you like to read about or exchange with us? Do you have any questions, or can you provide any interesting details or anecdotal stories about retiree issues? Or maybe you can write an article about an unusual trip or hobby. The Editors are always on the lookout for this kind of content, and would welcome such contributions.

From The President

by Arnie Peskin

Autumn is in the air (at least on the day I am writing this column) and before you know, it will be the beginning of a new year. That will mark the time that my term as BREA President ends, so this will be my last 'From the President' newsletter entry. It is also a natural time to reflect about my experience as head of this organization.



The two years I have been President following two years as Vice-President have been both rewarding and challenging. The reward has been the privilege of serving this diverse body in the important work it does. The greatest challenge, by far, has been to mobilize the hundreds who are BREA members and the other hundreds who are retirees but not yet BREA members to get and stay involved. There is a dedicated core of members who do so much of the work of BREA in its various roles, and there should be many, many more joining them. In fact there must be greater involvement if the organization is to maintain its health and viability.

During the past two years, I believe BREA has largely succeeded in meeting its social agenda as well as its more serious work as liaison between retirees and the Laboratory. We have viewed with amazement many of the new initiatives at BNL, basked in the glow of its achievements, and helped where we could to solve its problems. We have enjoyed the fellowship of the other retirees, and suffered the inevitable losses of members who are no longer with us. BREA has rarely been dull! I personally will try to stay as active as I can, attending the monthly business meetings, social events, and committee

work as needed. My primary task will be representing BREA on the BNL Community Advisory Committee, succeeding the late Graham Campbell. I wish next year's officers and all the BREA members a very happy and successful new year.

North Fork Tour

Unfortunately, only ten people signed up for the one-day tour of the North Fork announced in the last issue, well below the minimum necessary, so BREA had no alternative but to cancel the tour. We regret having had to take this step, but it appears that there is not enough support from local members to make it worthwhile for BREA to continue to arrange trips like this. However, we would like to remind members that BERA has a very active program of trips, and we encourage all of you to take advantage of these.

LIPA Assistance Program

BREA would like to call your attention to a recently-announced LIPA program aimed at income-eligible seniors who are 62 and over to help pay their electricity bills. This will take the form of a one-time only credit of \$200 to the LIPA account of qualifying seniors. In order to qualify, the annual income limit for a household consisting of one person must be no more than \$23,556, and for two people, no more than \$30,804.

Any BREA members who are eligible should contact their nearest LIPA Customer Service Center. Further information can be found on the LIPA website:

www.lipower.org/residential/seniors.html

Sailing Through the North West Passage aboard Fiona

by Eric Forsyth

Probably sticking your neck out by sailing across the top of the world is not what is commonly expected of a seventy-seven year-old retiree; as the old joke goes, you don't have to be crazy, but it helps. This was to be my third cruise to the Arctic and as conditions vary widely every year I had plan B – if the ice proved too formidable I planned to return to the Atlantic Ocean and spend the winter in Brazil and the Caribbean. As it happened I reached my drop-dead decision point only two days late and decided to push on to Alaska and hence to San Francisco. The cruise took *Fiona* to the Canadian Maritimes and then Greenland. From there we sailed north of Baffin Island to 75°N to avoid the ice that always builds up on the east coast of Baffin.

Our course was then west to Resolute on Cornwallis Island; on the way we stopped at Beechey Island. This was the spot that the Franklin Expedition wintered over in 1845-46. Three sailors died there of natural causes and they are buried near the shoreline. In 1986 Canadian scientists exhumed the bodies and showed that although their deaths were due to respiratory problems they were suffering from lead poisoning caused by the newly-developed method of canning food. After that the Franklin Expedition disappeared from human ken. Many years later it was discovered that their ships had been crushed in the ice near King William Island and that all men had been lost. It was very exciting (and challenging!) to follow in their wake. At Resolute we were beset by pack ice and forced into shallow water near the shore, when the tide went out we were left high and dry. But we floated on the next high tide without sustaining damage. We had to wait ten anxious days before the ice began to open to the south. To add to the excitement we were visited by a polar bear. After two hundred miles we became trapped by solid pack ice near the scene of Franklin tragedy, but after a couple of days the wind switched and we were able

to work our way out.



Fiona pushed ashore by pack ice at Resolute

When Roald Amundsen made the first transit of the North West Passage in 1903-6 he wintered at a bay named after his sailboat – Gjoa Haven. We anchored there for a night and encountered one of the first boats making the passage from west to east this year – *Ocean Watch*. A week later I made the decision to push on to Alaska and California, although it was nearly four thousand miles to San Francisco and we had to move fast to avoid the winter ice formation. After clearing Point Barrow, the northern-most tip of Alaska, we encountered heavy weather and the steering system went out. We had to sail for nearly three days using the emergency tiller in cold, wet conditions. This did not impress my two-man crew and at Nome they decided to leave the boat. I sailed *Fiona* single-handed across the Bering Sea to Dutch Harbor where I was able to get a new crew to complete the voyage to the Golden Gate Bridge, nearly 9,000 miles from Long Island, the hard way.

Editors' note: This is the latest in a series of feature articles about the current activities and whereabouts of members. All submissions of this type are welcomed. More details are available on Eric's website; www.yachtfiona.com

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BNL Retired Employees Association



Update on SeniorNet

By Ronnie Evans

SeniorNet is an international, all-volunteer, not-for-profit organization founded over twenty years ago. It is the world's largest training organization for adults 50 and over, with a primary mission to provide seniors with education in and access to computer technology. SeniorNet has Learning Centers throughout the United States, and the branch in Huntington has been recognized as one of the outstanding centers in the country. Now that operation is expanding to offer convenient training for adults in eastern Suffolk County.

Thanks to Sharon Sparks, a BNL retiree, the coordinators of SeniorNet of Huntington were informed that BREA might be a good resource for both instructors and students. During the summer three volunteers from SeniorNet attended a monthly meeting of BREA. They gave a brief description of the organization, saying that they would be opening a new Learning Center in Yaphank and were looking for volunteers from BREA who would be willing to serve as instructors. The new Learning Center is located at 1490 William Floyd Parkway, Suite 108, East Yaphank (south of the lab and just south of Exit 68 on the L.I.E.), and will provide hands-

on instruction.

In July, SeniorNet held an open house at the Yaphank center for prospective instructors and Dave Cox, Ken Mohring and Ronnie Evans attended. All volunteered to become coaches or instructors for upcoming classes. A few weeks later there was an open house for students which produced an overwhelming response. The first two classes - Introduction to Computers I and Introduction to Computers II - were quickly filled, and a subsequent second session of the Intro I class was likewise filled.

More volunteer instructors will be needed in the coming months. Courses will be expanded in order to cover some of the wide variety of topics already given in the Huntington center. Please consider volunteering to instruct or coach at the Yaphank center. If you know of any person over 50 years of age who would like to become more proficient in computer skills and applications, please give them the website information - www.seniornethuntington.org. The SeniorNet coordinator in Huntington is Slava Vero (svero@fsl-li.org), and she will be more than happy to answer any questions.